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ACHIEVEMENT ~ DIVERSITY ~ RESPECT

Headteacher: Ms Jo Butler

17 December 2025

PINS

Dear Madam,

**Supporting letter re S62A/2025/0133
Cotham School Stoke Lodge Playing Fields, West Dene, Shirehampton Bristol.**

I am writing to reinforce the many detailed comments in support of this planning application for 8 CCTV cameras at our school playing fields in Stoke Bishop.

I have reviewed all the comments on this application and can still see the strength of misunderstanding that remains within the local community. I deeply regret this long running campaign and that some local people still do not accept that Cotham School playing fields are just that- the playing fields for our 1700 students, inner city school. The High Court Judge confirmed in June this year that the land is educational land, our school playing fields and not parkland. This land was appropriated by the City Council to be used as education land in 1947 and has been used as playing fields ever since. We have recently reinstated the perimeter fence to the fields. We have also varied the fence line to enable a local open space beyond the fence alongside the playground and adult education centre outdoor space, as well as a perimeter route for joggers and dog walkers.

As Chair of Governors it is ultimately my responsibility to ensure that we run our school efficiently and effectively in line with the law, education regulations, best practice and to ensure a really good school for our young people. As part of this we have a duty to keep students safe at school.

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Our school playing fields are our outdoor classroom, which we must manage in the same way as the main site and all our buildings. We must provide a safe and secure environment for our students to learn and thrive. The public are not allowed on our site when lessons are underway.

Having recently reinstated the fence we have immediately experienced terrible vandalism to the fence with persons unknown damaging and removing panels, and facilitating free public access.

We need CCTV cameras to manage, monitor and take action to ensure our students are safe at school. Members of the public should not enter the school without permission, and in the event of unlawful entry CCTV cameras would afford us proper records and appropriate action can then be taken. It is notable that the police, several partner secondary heads, staff and parents have written to support this application acknowledging the need for a safe and secure environment for learning.

Our consultants have submitted the appropriate technical statements to support this application. The campaigners including Bristol Tree Forum have sought to discredit this work. I do not wish to go into these in detail except to make a point with regard to the Bristol Local Plan.

The Bristol Local Plan 2011 policies BCS9 and DM17 are concerned with green infrastructure. It is unclear whether this includes sports pitches, nevertheless we have always accepted that our fields contribute to the green infrastructure in the City. The draft Bristol Local Plan 2023 was subject to a planning inquiry in the spring this year and following subsequent inspectors' letters it is likely that the school playing fields will be classified as Local Green Space - sports and playing fields - in line with Policy G12. It is interesting to note that the City Council's response to the inspector's letter, BCC Examination note – Protected Open Space (prepared in response to Inspectors' document IN10) and the assessment of quality of open space to be included in Policy G12 shows that our fields only meet one criterion that is 'for health and recreation' but not for ecological, urban landscape townscape, heritage and cultural value. (page 56). The link is here. [file](#)

I trust that you will be able to assess this application in line with policy and procedures and approve the CCTV cameras which will enable us to discharge our duty in leading a large comprehensive school and providing a high-quality education for Bristol young people.

Yours faithfully

Sandra Fryer

Chair of Governors.

Cotham School